

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 904

By Parkinson

A RESOLUTION to recognize and commend the ministry of Bishop Edward Houston Stephens, Jr., and his wife, Elder Beverly Clark Stephens, at Golden Gate Cathedral of Memphis.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those individuals who have answered a divine call to the ministry and who have served with dedication, vigor, and enthusiasm to perform God's work for their congregations and their communities; and

WHEREAS, two such individuals are Bishop Edward Houston Stephens, Jr., and his wife, Elder Beverly Clark Stephens, who have pastored the congregation of Golden Gate Cathedral of Memphis for the past twenty-six years; and

WHEREAS, described as a trailblazer of Christian living, Bishop Stephens is a profound teacher, a provocative preacher, and a minister with diverse talents who excels in relating religious truths to the stressful issues of our time; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of this stalwart and dynamic Christian servant, the Golden Gate Cathedral of Memphis has survived and thrived, growing in numbers from a mere 130 persons in 1986, when Bishop Stephens' pastoral ministry there began, until today as the membership now numbers approximately 4,000 congregants; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Stephens is a native Memphian who was called to the ministry in 1979, while attending Memphis State University, where he completed majors in business administration and sociology. He subsequently received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biblical Studies from Crichton Bible College. He has additionally been awarded an Honorary Doctorate from St. Thomas Christian College and is an alumnus of Harvard University's Summer Leadership Institute; and

WHEREAS, in affiliation with the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, Bishop Stephens served two years as the first State Overseer for Tennessee and was consecrated to the office of Bishop in 1996. He serves as the Bishop of the Central Region for this organization, which covers Arkansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Kentucky, Missouri, Kansas, Tennessee, Minnesota, and North and South Dakota; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Stephens and Elder Beverly Stephens have made phenomenal accomplishments, actualizing their commitment to helping others in the name of God Almighty. In union and unison, they shepherd the church body to provide two worship locations in the city and to operate forty extended ministries including S.T.A.R. Academy, which is the only college preparatory elementary school in our State offering classes for kindergarten through fifth grade; and

WHEREAS, a congregation blessed in abundance in accordance with the goodness it has imparted to the church and unchurched of the community, the future of Golden Gate Cathedral continues to unfold through a plethora of outreach ministries, including youth, senior citizens, the homeless, abused women, and health management; and

WHEREAS, the matrimonial union of Bishop and Elder Stephens has been richly blessed with three sons, Edward III, Eron, and Evan, and in them, their parents are exceedingly proud; and

WHEREAS, throughout their estimable careers as religious leaders and humble servants of God, Bishop Edward and Elder Beverly Stephens have demonstrated the utmost compassion, ability, and integrity in leading the congregation of Golden Gate Cathedral of Memphis, and they have won the unbridled respect and admiration of friends, family, congregants, and leaders throughout the greater Memphis community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby recognize the remarkable religious leadership provided to Golden Gate Cathedral of Memphis by Bishop Edward Houston Stephens, Jr., and his wife,

Elder Beverly Clark Stephens, and we commend their consistent display of Christian servant leadership within their church and beyond. We extend to them our best wishes for continued success and abundant blessings in all their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.